

UTASS Briefing: 13th February 2017.

HEDGEROW AND BOUNDARY GRANTS.

Natural England have announced that this scheme has opened for applications for hedgerow restoration (gapping-up, coppicing and laying), stone-faced bank repair and stone wall restoration including wall-top wiring. Payments are “standard costs” (set rates per metre) up to £5,000.00. Grants are **not** available on fields which are already under a Countryside Stewardship, HLS or UELS agreement or have a ‘live’ 2016 Hedgerow and Boundary agreement. It is a competitive process with higher scoring for applications from:

- Smaller holdings.
- Holdings that have had previous Environmental Stewardship agreements.
- More than £1000.00.

The scheme is currently only open for paper applications though an online process is expected to be available in March. The closing date for applications to Natural England is **28th April 2017**. Offers of grants will then be made from July 2017 with a completion date of 31st December 2018. The scheme requires “before” and “after” photographic evidence. Forms are available from the gov.uk website (Google Hedgerow and Boundary Grants 2017) or can be downloaded at UTASS. There are also Woodland creation and Woodland management plan grants available. If you are interested in applying and require assistance from UTASS it would be helpful to do so sooner rather than later to fit in with BPS applications.

INDUSTRIAL INJURIES DISABLEMENT BENEFIT

Lisa Dalton has drawn attention to the Industrial Injuries Scheme, which provides non-contributory no-fault benefits for disablement because of an accident at work, or because of one of over 70 prescribed diseases known to be a risk from certain jobs. All Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefits, except Industrial Death Benefit, are tax free. They are payable in addition to other incapacity and disability benefits but taken into account against income-related benefits. If your accident or disease is caused by **self-employed work** or employment not treated as employed earner’s employment, **you are not covered by the scheme**. Obtain a claim form from Barnsley Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit Centre. They can be contacted on 0345 758 5433 or <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-injuries-disablement-benefits-technical-guidance/industrial-injuries-disablement-benefits-technical-guidance>

AVIAN FLU

Currently, anyone who keeps poultry or captive birds is required by law to house them or otherwise keep them separate from wild birds. This is to reduce the risk of disease spreading. The requirement remains in place until 28 February. After then poultry keepers may let birds out if they are not in a High Risk area, made a risk assessment and prepared the “range area” appropriately. At the moment all of County Durham, except for a small area West of Consett, is considered not to be High Risk. More information can be found on the Gov.uk website <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu>

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UTASS AGM REMINDER.

This will be held on the 7th March at 7.30pm followed by a talk from Scott Donaldson and a hot supper. For catering purposes please contact UTASS to reserve a place.

For further advice and assistance please call UTASS 01833 641010.

Richard Betton.

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